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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the specification, paragraph [0001] has been amended to include a specific reference to earlier filed applications for which benefit is claimed under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119(e) and 120.

Other changes in the specification or in the attached formal drawings reflect corrections and/or clarifications designed to clear up obvious inconsistencies between the drawings and/or the teachings in the specification and to conform the informal drawings in accordance with the requirements and conventions for formal drawings.

No new matter has been added as a result of this amendment. The changes are shown with strikethrough for deleted matter and underlining for added matter.

Claims 1-16 have been canceled. Claims 17-44 are pending. New claims 17-44 recite embodiments having a different scope than in the allowed claims of U.S. Pat. Appl. No. 09/481,451. No new matter has been added as a result of this amendment.

New claims distinguished from JP-59133

JP-59133 was previously cited as prior art in parent application, 09/481,451. New independent claim 17 is drawn to an apparatus for forming a continuous sheet from a molten, viscous material, comprising a discharge manifold having at least one manifold inlet configured for attachment to upstream piping; a discharge opening; and a roller. The scope of this claim is distinguished from JP-59133, because JP-59133 fails to disclose a manifold configured for attachment to piping for regulating the flow of molten, viscous material. Skilled artisans will recognize that a manifold is an intermediate vessel connected to upstream piping for mediating flow of materials between an upstream source and a downstream recipient.

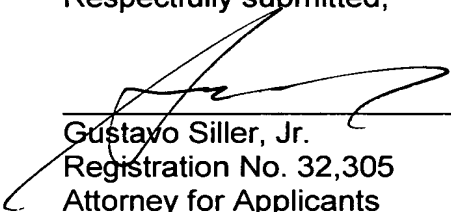
Although JP-59133 discloses a large hopper (3) for transferring dough to the screw (4), the hopper is not a manifold inlet. In particular, the hopper is not configured for attachment to piping for regulating the flow of molten, viscous material. The function of the hopper in JP-59133 is analogous to the

hopper 40 in Fig. 6 of the instant application. However, unlike the claimed invention, JP-59133 does not disclose transfer of molten, viscous materials from a hopper through piping that feeds into a manifold.

Claim 17 is further distinguished from Driessen (U.S. 4,790,242), also cited during the prosecution of parent application, 09/481,451. Specifically, Driessen fails to disclose a roller associated with a discharge manifold and there is no motivation or suggestion to combine Driessen with any of the other prior art in accordance with Claim 17.

Applicant respectfully submits that all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance and seek an early allowance thereof. If for any reason the Examiner is unable to allow the application in the next Office Action, Applicants respectfully request an interview with the undersigned attorney or agent to discuss any outstanding issues.

Respectfully submitted,



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Figure 1

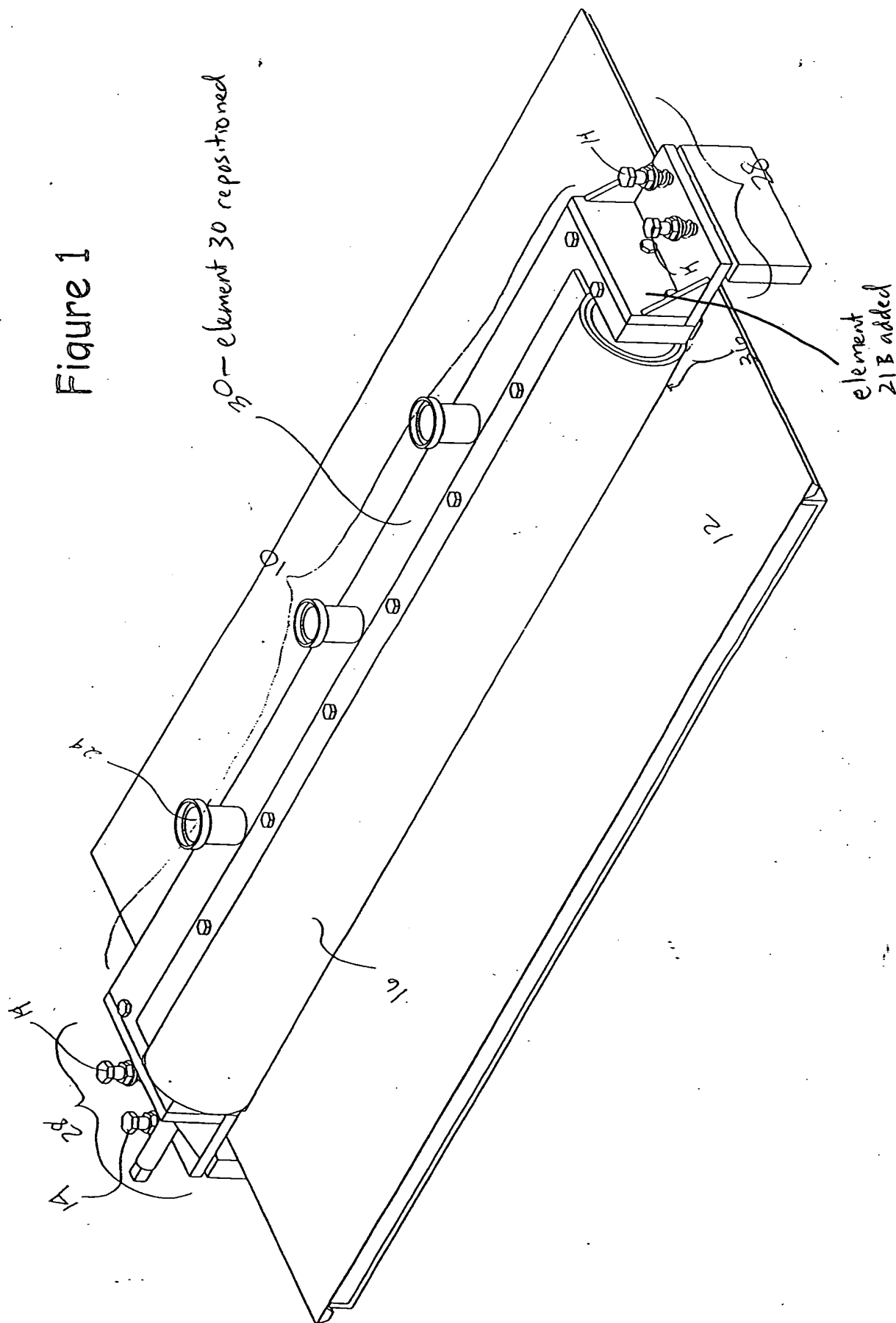


Figure 2

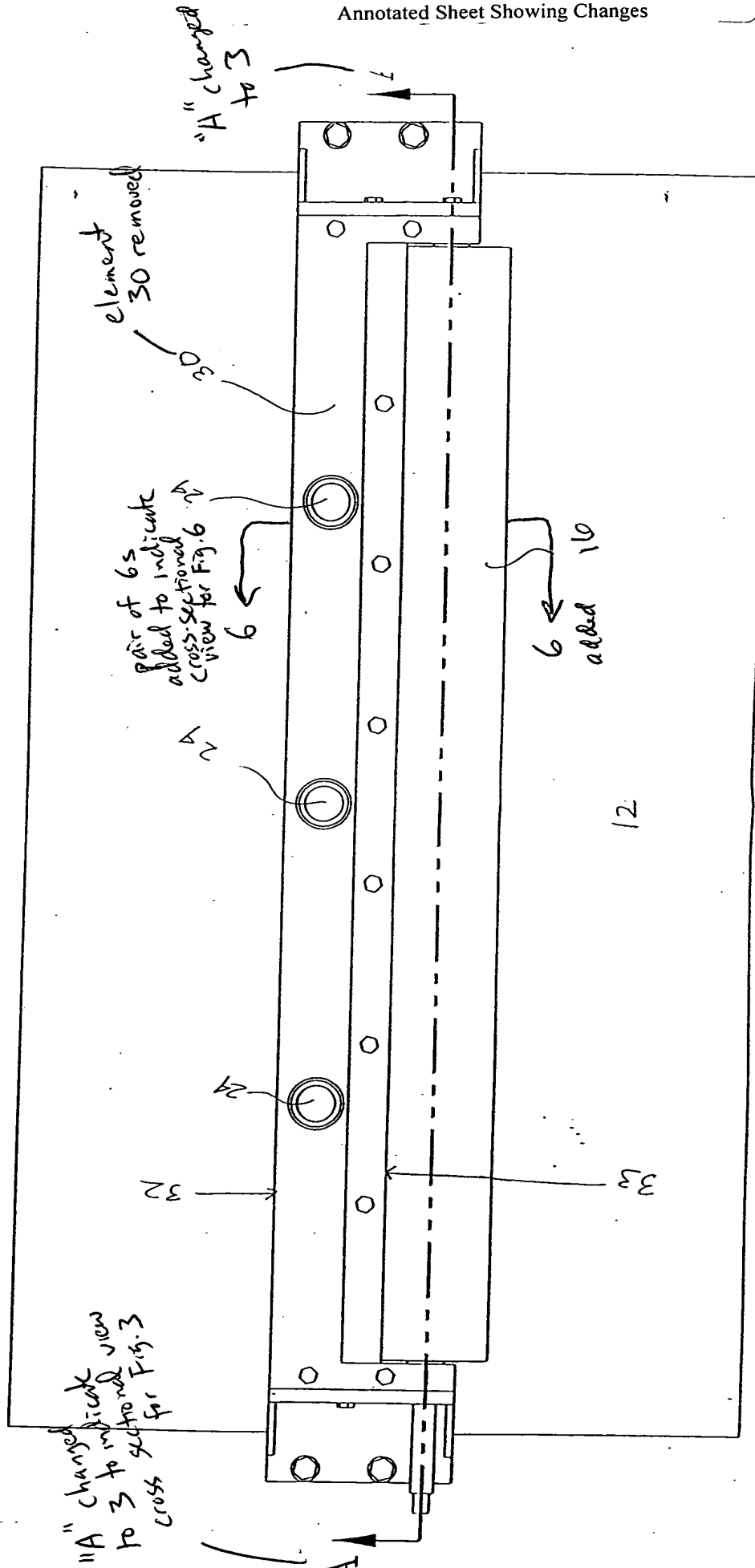


Figure 3

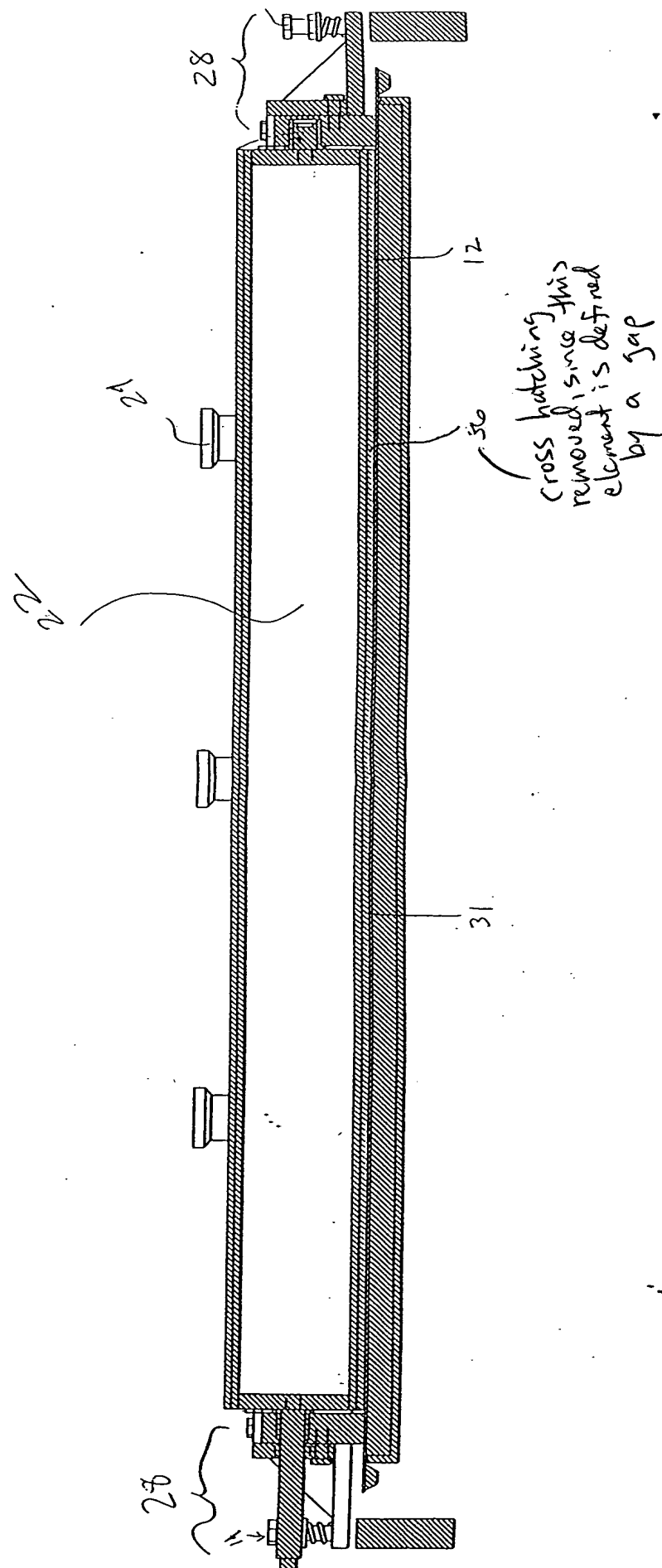


Figure 4

no material
changes

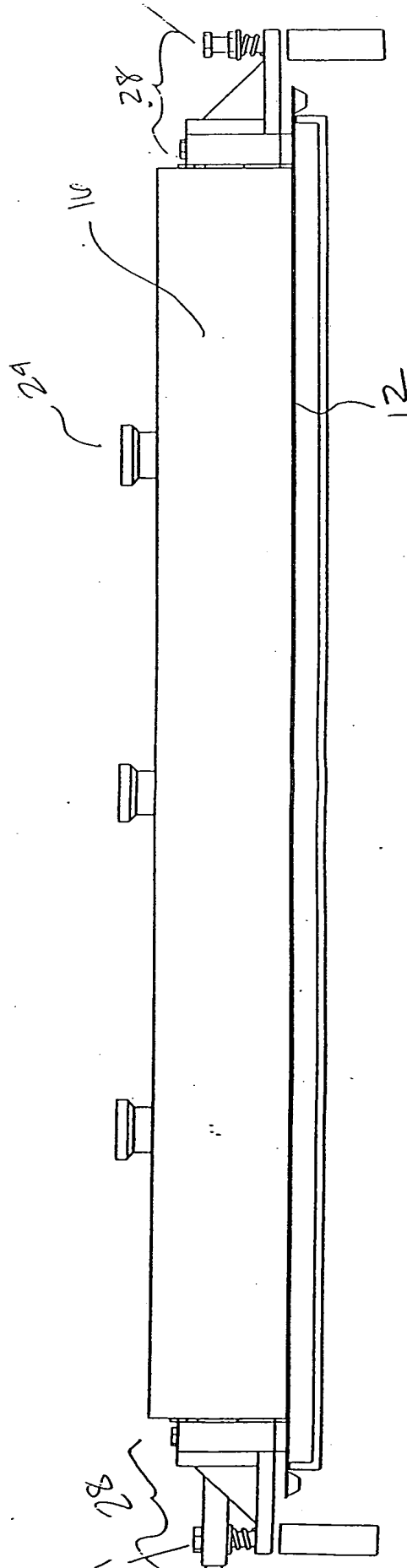
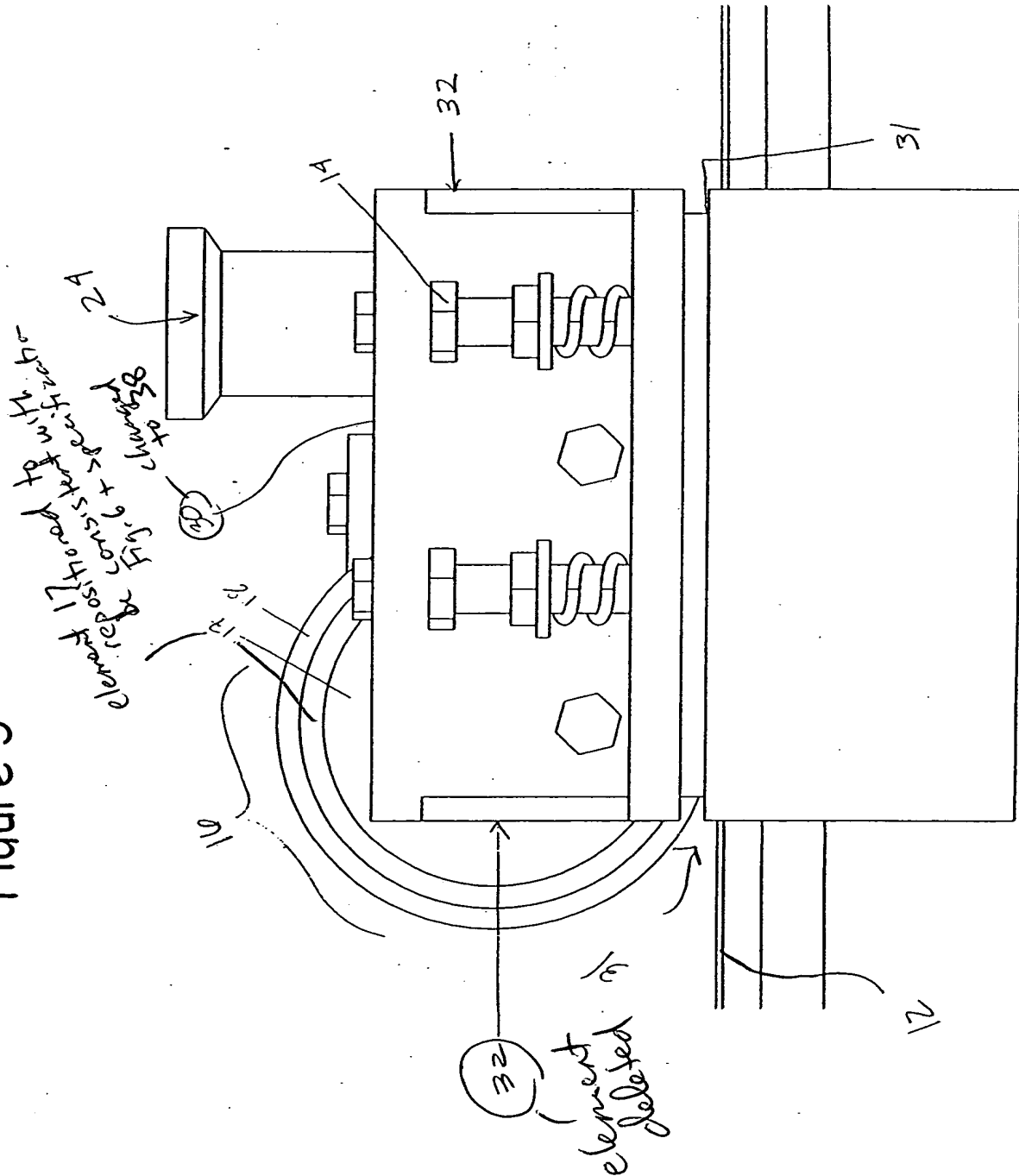
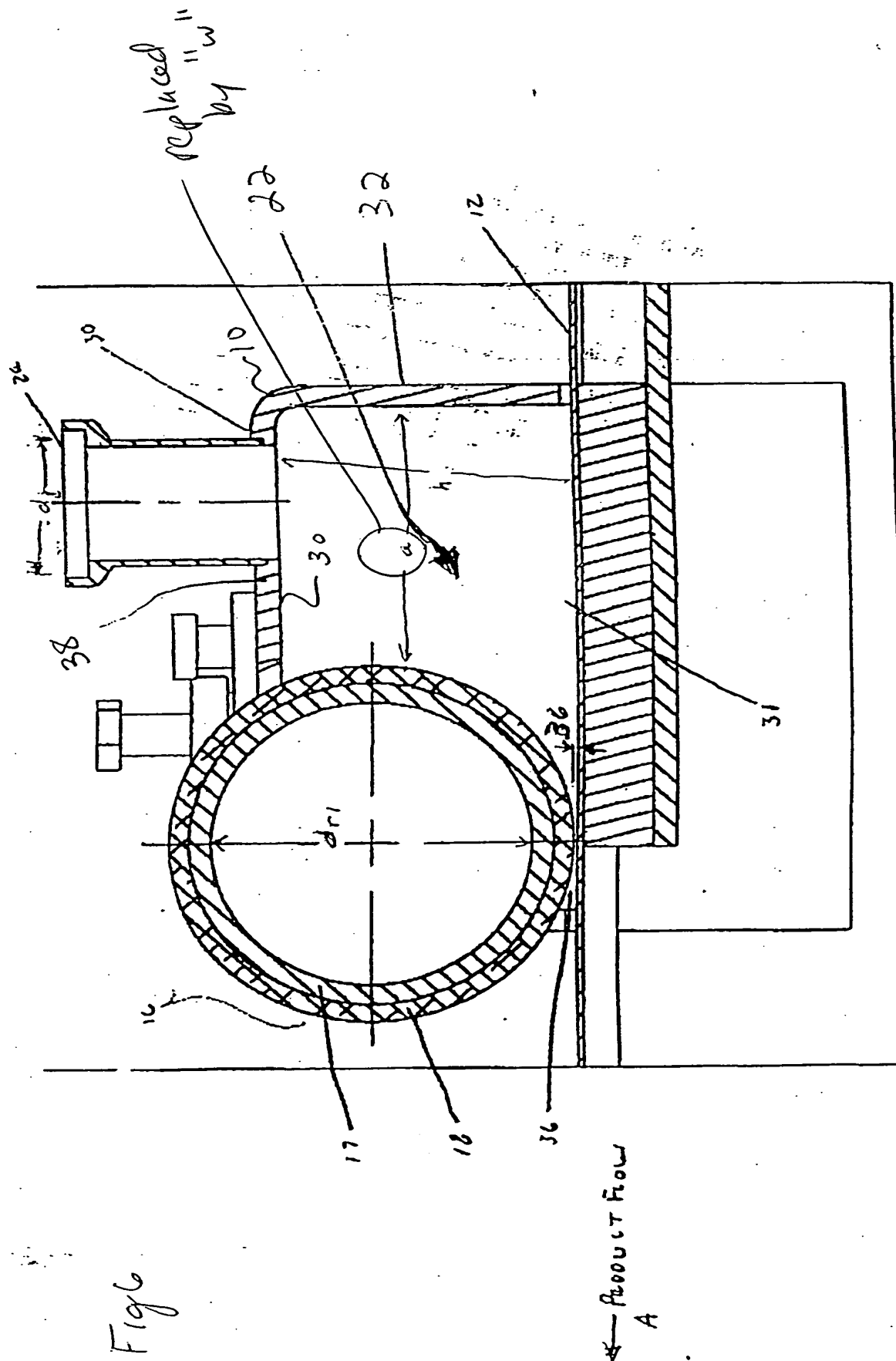


Figure 5





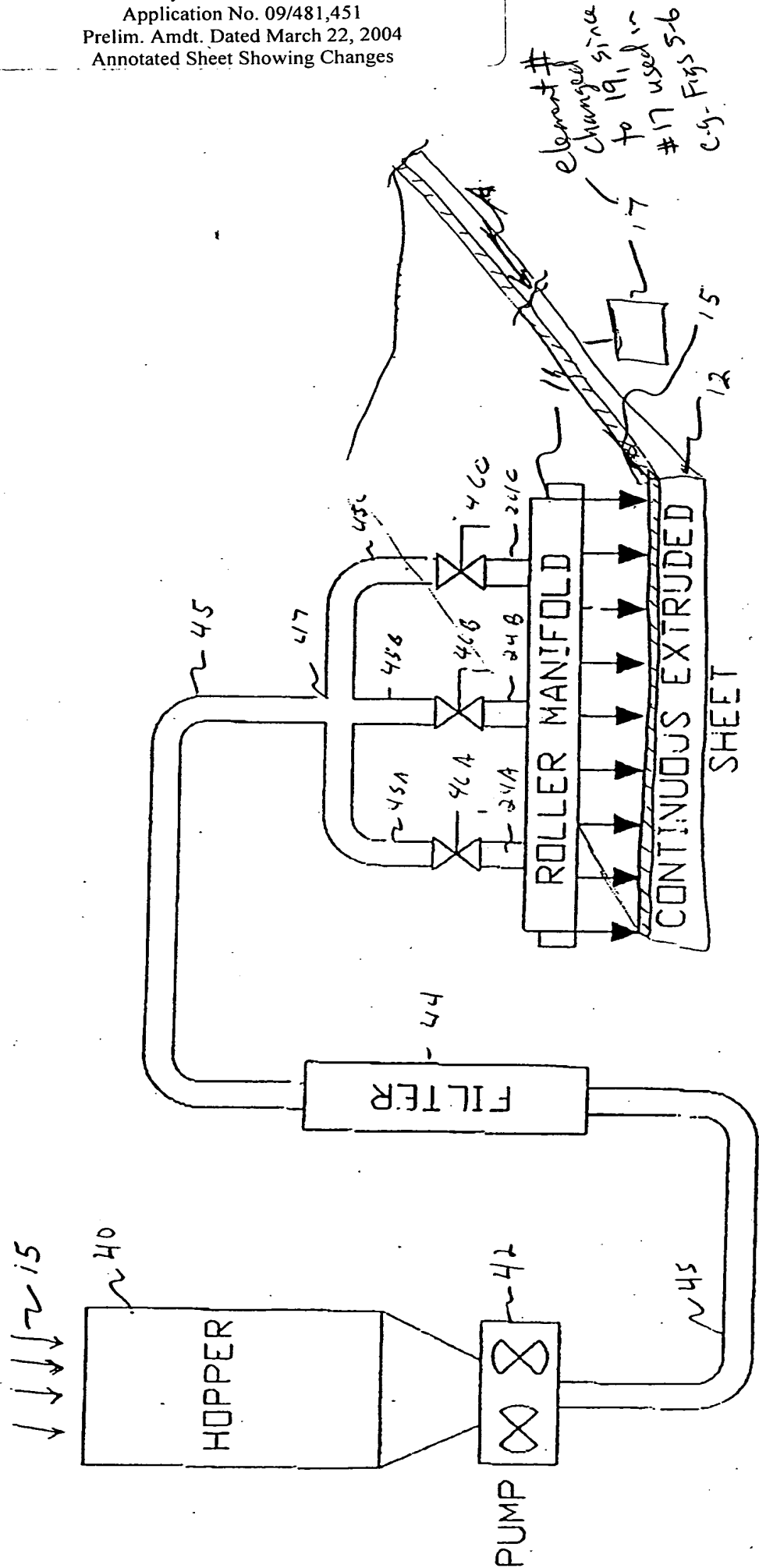


Fig 7